

# CAMPUS Firewatch™

OCTOBER 2005

From the Editor .....	2
Legislation Update .....	7
Fire FYI .....	9
Campus Fire Log .....	10
Three Deadly Nights .....	12

## All in the name of Brotherhood?

By Todd Mattox

*This article first appeared in the Fall 2005 issue of FRMT News, a publication of HRH/Kirklin & Co., LLC. Reprinted with permission.*

Founded in a pursuit of brotherhood and a desire to reinforce excellence, fraternities have long committed themselves to the simplistic task of developing friendships and promoting the well being of members. Why then do we choose to act irresponsible and place our brothers and those who truly wish to enter into our organizations in dangerous and life threatening situations? It occurs time and again on campuses throughout North America, chapters young and old, at private and public institutions, in urban and rural settings.

### Reinforcement of values

An event in a significant number of chapters which has quickly drifted from its sole purpose to reinforce

Continued on page 13

## 17 Million Opportunities

Campus fire safety is getting increased scrutiny by parents, students, administrators and legislators. All of these groups are realizing that more emphasis needs to be placed on providing both a fire-safe environment and, more importantly, effective fire safety training and education. By being more knowledgeable about fire safety, students and parents are in a better position to select fire-safe housing and to take actions that can protect them from a tragic outcome if a fire should break out.

There is a strong connection that can be made between fire safety on the nation's 2,500 schools and in society as a whole. The fire deaths and incidents that have occurred over the past five years on campuses have a number of parallels with the fatal fires that are claiming lives every day in cities.

There is also an incredibly unique opportunity to correct the societal fire safety problem in the next five, ten or twenty years by focusing on the fire safety problem on campuses right now.

Continued on page 4

## Parents must empower college students

By Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH)

Each year, college kids are dying in preventable, avoidable off-campus housing fires. As parents, we have a responsibility to do all we can to make sure the apartments and houses our children live in when they are away at school are safe.

First, we need to know the facts. Of all the student housing fire deaths across our nation since 2000, 76 percent of them have occurred in off-campus housing. An additional 11 percent of deaths occurred in Greek fraternity/sorority housing. Also, since 2000, 11 of Ohio's college and university students have been killed in housing fires, with three of those deaths occurring just this past April.

Common causes for these fires include:

- Lack of automatic fire sprinklers.
- Missing or disabled smoke alarms.
- Careless disposal of smoking materials.
- Lack of evacuation routes or blocked evacuation routes.
- Misused or neglected electrical sources.

Continued on page 3

# FROM THE Editor

I recently spoke at a conference of university officials. As with all of the presentations that I make, I emphasize the positive aspects of Prevention, Detection and Suppression, or, "The Circle of Life."

At one point, a member of the audience asked why I advocate the use of sprinklers when "everyone knows that it is smoke that kills." He is right in one respect—a majority of the people that die in fires are killed by smoke inhalation and not by direct contact with the fire. However, there is one major drawback to the basis of his argument, that sprinklers do not make a difference in saving lives.

This is an argument that I have heard a number of times, from a number of different people. Following the fatal fire at Southern Adventist University last spring that killed one student, even fire officials were reported to have made statements to the effect that sprinklers would not have made any difference in the outcome of the fire (a mistaken conclusion, in my opinion).

After over 20 years in fire safety that has included serving as a fire fighter for the Amherst Fire Department, a corporate fire protection engineer, a fire protection engineer for the Phoenix Fire Department and the chief fire investigator for the National Fire Protection Association, I am convinced of the benefits of sprinklers in saving lives. Sprinklers will put out the fire, stopping the production of smoke which kills and injures the occupants.

Sprinklers are only a part of the equation. Many buildings do have either fire alarm systems or smoke alarms in them. These provide the vital early warning about a fire so that the occupants can escape and the fire department can begin responding. However, these systems can only save lives if they are operational.

So often, in the fatal fires, the smoke alarms are either missing or inoperable. Or, in some residence hall fires, the building fire alarm system is not operational. This most recently occurred at a school in Mississippi where the fire alarm system failed to operate and the occupants had to bang on doors to alert one another. An almost identical situation occurred last April at another school in Mississippi and when the fatal fire at ATO fraternity broke out in August 2004, it was reported that the fire alarm system had been disabled and did not operate.

The third part of the equation is fire prevention. If the fire does not occur in the first place, then neither the detection or suppression component has to be called into action. Or, if the fire does occur, the occupants know the actions to take to protect themselves and the effects of the fire can be minimized. Fire prevention, however, is the component that is so often over-

Continued on next page

## CAMPUS OCTOBER 2005 Firewatch™

Campus Firewatch is a publication of writer-tech.com, llc, a technical writing firm specializing in fire safety. All of the material contained in Campus Firewatch is copyrighted and may not be reproduced or distributed without permission.

Campus fire safety is a complex issue. The information in this newsletter is provided to help you in your efforts to provide as fire-safe a community as possible. However, it is no replacement for professional advice. For further assistance, contact your local fire department.

### Subscribe Today!

You can subscribe to Campus Firewatch, online, and receive your own copy each month, right to your email address. Simply visit our web site at [www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com).

### Reprints

We welcome reprints of the articles that appear in Campus Firewatch. Please contact us at [publisher@campus-firewatch.com](mailto:publisher@campus-firewatch.com) for permission to reprint material.

### Campus Firewatch™

a publication of writer-tech.com, llc  
P.O. Box 1046  
Belchertown, MA 01007  
PH: (413) 323-6002  
FX: (413) 460-0092  
[publisher@campus-firewatch.com](mailto:publisher@campus-firewatch.com)  
[www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com)

### Design and Layout:

McCusker Communications, Inc.  
575 Washington Street  
Canton, MA 02021  
PH: (781) 401-3174  
FX: (781) 401-3175  
[cmccusker@cmccusker.com](mailto:cmccusker@cmccusker.com)  
[www.cmccusker.com](http://www.cmccusker.com)

From the editor Continued from page 2

looked, especially for students that live off-campus.

People living off-campus frequently do not receive the fire safety information that they should, either from the community or from the school. Since almost 80% of the fatalities occur in these rented houses and apartments, it is clearly where the greatest risk lies.

All three components are equally important and necessary to give the highest level of protection to students. They compliment and backup each other and work in concert to provide a fire safe environment.

*Ed Comeau, the editor of Campus Firewatch, is the former chief fire investigator for the National Fire Protection Association. He began his involvement in campus fire safety as a fire fighter with the Amherst, Massachusetts, fire department while pursuing his degree in civil engineering. He can be reached at publisher@campus-firewatch.com.*

Parents must empower college students Continued from page 1

Add to these dangers the problem that many college students rent their living spaces from absentee landlords — landlords who simply aren't around or who live hundreds of miles away. In far too many cases, there is no one checking in to ensure that simple fire safety measures are enforced. And so, without nearby landlords, it is frequently up to families to assess the potential fire hazards when a student first moves in.

Just last month, my wife Fran and I had our own sobering experience when our daughter moved in to her off-campus apartment to begin her first year of law school. The apartment is one of three units located in the upstairs of a house. When Fran was helping our daughter move in, she noticed right away that the smoke alarm at the top of stairs — the only one in the shared hallway of the three apartments — not only had no cover on it, it had no battery. And, on top of that, there wasn't even a smoke detector located inside the apartment! Fran went ahead and installed two, herself.

That is unacceptable. And that is why we, as parents, must be diligent. Check out where your children are living while at school. Look around. Do the smoke alarms work? Are there accessible fire escape routes? Are the exits blocked? Make sure your children know the dangers of leaving lit candles unattended. Make sure they know the risks of using space heaters too close to furniture and fabric. Make sure they know the dangers of smoking cigarettes and the importance of NEVER disabling a fire alarm — whether it's to smoke indoors or to use the battery for some other purpose.

There is, however, only so much parents can do from afar. Students, themselves, need to take responsibility for their actions. College is a bridge to adulthood. As parents, we must empower our kids to protect themselves. If we don't, a Friday night party, a Tuesday afternoon study group, or even a Saturday spent watching movies could needlessly be their last.

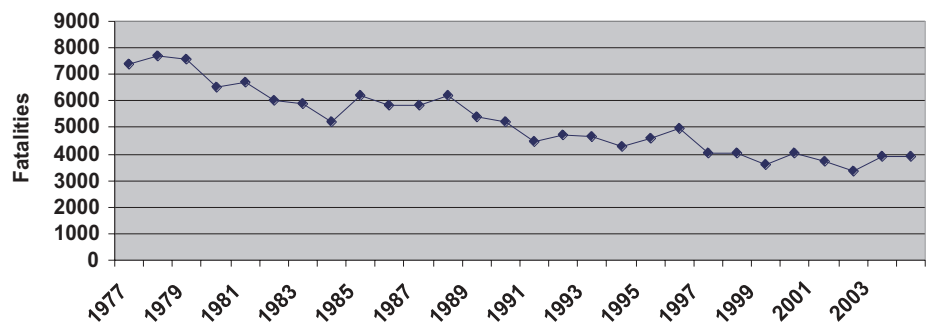
*Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) is a co-chairman of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus. He has been an active supporter of campus fire safety and introduced the proclamation for Campus Fire Safety Month in the U.S. Senate on the behalf of the Center for Campus Fire Safety.*

17 Million Opportunities Continued from page 1

### Fire safety in society

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 3,900 people died in 2004 and 17,785 were injured in fires that have caused \$9.8 billion in direct property damage in all occupancies across the nation. Since 1977, the loss of life has dropped from over 7,000 deaths to 3,900 in 2004. While the overall trend is downward, it has reached a relative plateau in the past ten years.

Despite the wide-spread adoption of home smoke alarms in the mid- to late-1980s, there have not been any dramatic downward trends in the loss of life from fires in the United States.



- 82% - Number of the fatalities have occurred in the home (one- and two-family homes and apartments).
- 6,300 - Average loss of life from 1977 to 1989
- 4,325 - Average loss of life from 1990 to 2004
- 3,900 - Loss of life for 2004
- 8% - Difference in 2004 loss of life from 10 year average

The number of fire deaths in the United States has reached a plateau where new, stronger and innovative efforts are

Continued on next page

17 Million Opportunities Continued from page 1

needed to further reduce this loss of life. Smoke alarms have been instrumental in reducing the number of fire deaths since their introduction in the 1980s. However, there is no other similar technology on the horizon that can be quickly implemented that will have the same reduction of fire deaths. Residential sprinklers will unquestionably make a dramatic difference, but the timeframe for their adoption is a long one.

An aggressive fire safety education campaign that reaches a wider audience can make a significant difference in the very near future.

### Campus Fire Safety Problem

Since January 2000, the Center has identified 81 fire fatalities in student housing with over 78% of these occurring in off-campus occupancies such as rented houses and apartments, which are typically privately owned and not affiliated with the school. (Since the media does not always identify an off-campus fatal fire as involving a student, it is believed that the number of fatalities that are being reported by the Center is actually low.)

Even with this underreporting, the risk to students clearly is in the off-campus environment. Common threads in a number of these fires include:

- Lack of automatic fire sprinklers
- Missing or disabled smoke alarms
- Careless disposal of smoking materials
- Alcohol consumption

Other issues also include cooking fire safety, electrical fire safety and candle fire safety.

Connecting the dots between campus fire safety and societal fire safety

A strong connection can be made between providing fire safety education program at a college or university and the larger society fire safety issues.

- In both the campus environment and society at large, residential occupancies are where the vast majority of the fire deaths are occurring (78% student residences, 82% in society at large).
- Common factors in both environments include smoking materials and disabled or missing smoke alarms.
- Sprinklers are not present in either the campus fire deaths or in the non-campus fire fatalities.

By addressing the fire safety problem on campuses it is possible to start tackling the larger societal fire safety problem in the long term. Some of the issues that should be considered when looking into these problems include the fact that many of the students are living on their own for the first time when they go to college and they may not have the necessary "life skills" needed to safely survive. This includes knowledge about smoke alarms, sprinklers, cooking fire safety, electrical fire safety, smoking materials, alcohol consumption and a host of other related and contributing factors.

By providing them with this fire safety information, they not only will be more knowledgeable about their fire safety while in college, but they will carry this education with them after they graduate. The result will be a better-informed member of society, one that understands the importance of fire safety and who can impact future trends in fire safety.

There are 17 million students enrolled in schools this fall. Quite simply, there is no other fire safety education opportunity that will impact as large a segment of society and that will have the long-term effect of reducing the loss of life, injury and property damage from fire. This is an opportunity to train a significant segment of the population about fire safety - more people than live in New England.

### Quick Fact Summary

- 2,500 - Number of four-year schools in the United States (U.S. Department of Education)
- 29 million - Number of people that comprise the 18 to 24 year-old age group (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 17 million - Number of students enrolled this fall in colleges and universities. This is greater than the population of the six New England states, combined (U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2/3 - The number of students estimated to live off-campus (U.S. Department of Education)
- 78% - The percentage of fatalities that have occurred off-campus houses and apartments since January 2000 (Center for Campus Fire Safety)

Currently, the focus of fire safety education programs tends to lean towards high-risk groups which are generally defined as being the very young and the elderly. However, this leaves a large group in the middle of approximately 201 million people between the ages of 14 and 65 (69% of the population) that routinely do not receive the fire safety information that they should.

This can be changed by reaching out to the 17 million students that are a somewhat "captive" audience where the fire safety community has the opportunity to impact the future of fire safety and the attendant loss of life and property damage that occurs. Fire safety education can be an effective intervention with this population just beginning to live

17 Million Opportunities Continued from previous page

independently for the first time in their lives, thus improving the life safety of the entire community.

Making the changes in their behavior and decision-making at this age is an opportunity to impact their behavior for the rest of their lives. For example, rather than trying to change the habits of a senior citizen that were built over a lifetime, by intervening at a much earlier age they can develop lifelong fire-safe habits.

### **Marketing fire safety**

The information or training that is delivered to college students is not necessarily age-appropriate or effective for reaching this demographic. Fire prevention training may be provided, but the real question to ask is whether or not it is effective.

At a recent college fire safety event, students were asked what actions they should take if their room caught on fire. Some of the responses included "Talk to someone," "Call the RD (resident director)," and, most disturbing, "I don't know." While this is certainly not a representative sampling of students everywhere, it may very well be indicative of the fact that the training is not penetrating and "sticking."

Techniques are needed that will focus the information in such a manner that the typical 18 to 24-year-old student will remember the messages far beyond their college tenure. This means using methods that are not considered "normal" for fire safety training programs.

### **What appeals to students?**

Look around on any campus at the advertising methods and material used to reach out to the students. Companies are marketing to this highly-prized demographic very effectively. Why shouldn't fire safety be just as much a marketable commodity?

A significant challenge is developing programs that are both effective yet engaging for the students. One avenue is to look at what students are reading. According to a number of campus officials, the two major magazines that students read are *Cosmopolitan* and *Maxim* or *Stuff*. (In one bookstore, *Cosmo* is so popular that it generally sells out within a day.) Both of these magazines can provide insight into what appeals to students and how advertisers craft their messages.

It is important to remember that students get their information in a much different way than in the past. With the explosion of the Internet, cellular telephones, and iPods, it is necessary to change how the fire safety message is communicated to the student. The messages have to be briefer, more graphic and riveting to get and hold their attention.

Students also socialize and gather in a different way, and this can also be attributed to the ease of communication that now exists with cell phones and instant messaging.

In a recently published book, "My Freshman Year," an anthropology professor, writing under the pseudonym Rebekah Nathan, was interested in learning more about student behavior that she was seeing in her classroom. She wanted to understand why students weren't coming to class, and when they did they would sleep or eat lunch during lectures and not take any notes. Realizing that these observations, and many others, were similar to those of her peers, she wanted to learn more about what motivates a student. Nathan enrolled anonymously in college (which she called AnyU) as a freshman and lived in the residence hall to conduct this study.

### **What did she learn that applies to fire safety?**

One of the important points that Nathan learned is that students don't congregate in large community gatherings as they had in the past. An example was when the Super Bowl was going to be aired in the residence hall lounge with free popcorn and drinks available. It was widely advertised, but when it came to game time only five people showed up and one of the big-screen televisions was then tuned to a different program. As she walked the hallways, she saw the game on in a number of rooms where there were small gatherings.

Even "mandatory" floor meetings were sparsely attended, despite the efforts of the resident assistants to get the students involved. The RAs would try to develop programs that would help to foster the sense of community among the residents on the floor or in the residence hall, but for the most part they were unsuccessful.

According to Nathan, "Rather than being located in its shared symbols, meetings, activities, and rituals, the university for an undergraduate was more accurately a world of self-selected people and events. The university community was experienced by most students as a relatively small, personal network of people who did things together."

Professor Nathan went on to observe, "When I asked students in interviews whether they felt they had a 'community' at AnyU, most said yes. But what they meant by community were these personal networks of friends..."

The implication for fire safety education is that any program that is designed or based on the concept of gathering students together will have to be one with an exceptional "draw." At a recent campus fire safety event, a showing of *Ladder 49* was sparsely attended, even though it was held in the campus stu-

Continued on next page

17 Million Opportunities Continued from previous page

dent center with free food and fire fighters on site.

On the following day, however, the fire safety training program was very well attended by several hundred students and included hands-on fire extinguisher training and burning a mockup of a student room. Fire safety “robots” were deployed around the campus to promote the program and were very successful in engaging the students. As students walked by during class breaks they were given Frisbees and other items that helped to bring them in and engage them.

Nathan reported that at AnyU, “If you had asked most students what happened with Movie Night, they would have answered, ‘I wanted to do, but when the time came, I didn’t,’ or ‘I forgot.’ They genuinely want to have a close community, while at the same time they resist the claims that community makes on their schedule and resources in the name of individualism, spontaneity, freedom, and choice.”

### The Bottom Line

Fire safety needs to be tailored to the students, both in content and delivery. What has traditionally worked for other demographic groups may not necessarily be effective with the 18-to-24 year old demographic.

To make a lasting and much-needed change in fire safety, it is critically important that this information be given to this demographic, not only for the four years that they are in school but for the rest of their lives. The information and messages that they receive (know two ways out, look for sprinklered housing, don’t disable smoke alarms, etc.) are applicable whether they are living in a residence hall, in a house or apartment, during their college tenure or throughout the rest of their lives.

What is needed is to have messages (and a delivery style) where the messages will “stick” and stay with them. At the University of Kentucky they gave out T-shirts that read “When the alarm sounds, move your butt so you won’t be an ash.” While this may not be the type of slogan that some schools would want on their T-shirts, there were a lot of students wearing them around campus.

When the Boulder Fire Department held the first Greek Fire Academy, they had to make it mandatory to get students to attend. However, once the students started talking about the Academy with their peers, the circumstances changed. Now in its fifth year, they are turning students away in large numbers who want to participate.

The University of Massachusetts/Amherst’s first Greek fire safety program was successful in getting a high level of involvement because of the interactive nature of the program. It involved hands-on exercises such as fire extinguisher training and navigating smoke-filled, darkened corridors. Every risk manager for each of the University’s sororities voluntarily attended on a Sunday morning to learn more about fire safety and what they could do in their own houses.

Sometimes it is necessary to look at what works versus what has been done in the past. To get inside the student’s head, so to speak, it is necessary to be a little edgy, or to “push the envelope” with the content. Methods or messages that are not a part of the traditional fire safety program need to be used.

### Keep in mind the original premise offered in this article:

- The number of fire deaths in the country in all occupancies has leveled off after significant drops that came

about as a result of the introduction of smoke alarms in the 1980s.

- There are no other similar technological solutions in the near future that will have the same widespread impact.
- The profile of fire fatalities at campuses across the country mirrors many of the fire deaths that occur in society as a whole
- Fire safety education in most community tends to focus on the very young and the elderly, leaving a sizable gap of people that do not routinely receive fire safety messages or information.
- Fire safety education can be instituted quickly and inexpensively.
- There are 17 million students enrolled in schools this fall.
- This is a rich opportunity to reach out and educate tomorrow’s generation of decision makers on how to make fire-safe decisions and purchases as they move into society.

17 million opportunities.

# LEGISLATION Update

---

## Federal - HR 128 - College Fire Prevention Act

---

### Co-Sponsors

#### Congresswoman

**Stephanie Tubbs Jones**

1009 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-7032 (tel.)  
(202) 225-1339 (fax)  
stephanie.tubbs.jones@mail.house.gov

#### Congressman Curt Weldon

2466 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2011 (tel.)  
(202) 225-8137 (fax)  
CurtPA07@mail.house.gov

*94 co-sponsors as of 10/2/05*

### Funding

\$100,000,000/year for five years

### Facilities

Dormitories and Greek housing  
nationwide

### Summary

This bill will provide 50% matching grants for the installation of sprinkler systems in dormitories and Greek housing.

### Status

2/9/05: Referred to the House subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness.

## Federal - S512 - Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act

---

### Sponsors

#### Senator Rick Santorum

511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-6324 (tel.)

*13 co-sponsors as of 10/2/05*

### Summary

This bill will provide a tax incentive to classify the retrofit of automatic sprinkler systems as 5-year property for the purposes of tax depreciation.

### Status

3/3/2005: Referred to the Committee on Finance.

Legislation Update Continued from previous page

## Federal - HR 1131 - Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2005

---

### Sponsor

**Congressman Curt Weldon (PA)**  
2466 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2011 (tel.)  
(202) 225-8137 (fax)  
CurtPA07@mail.house.gov

*132 co-sponsors as of 10/2/05*

### Summary

This bill will amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation.

### Funding

n/a

### Status

3/3/05 Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

## Federal - HR 2637 - Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act

---

### Sponsors

**Congressman Bill Pascrell**  
2464 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5751 (tel.)  
(202) 225-5782 (fax)

**Congressman Joe Wilson**  
212 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2452 (tel.)  
(202) 225-2455 (fax)

*36 co-sponsors as of 10/2/05*

## Federal - S 1196 - Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act

---

### Sponsor

**Senator Jon Corzine**  
502 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-3004  
(202) 224-4744 (tel.)  
(202) 228-2197 (fax)

### Summary

This bill will call for colleges and universities to report fire safety information to the US Department of Education for review by parents and students.

### Funding

n/a

### Status (House)

6/22/05 Legislation passed out of committee and moves to the full House for consideration.

### Status (Senate)

6/8/05 Referred to Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Continued on next page

Legislation Update Continued from previous page

## New York City - Int. No 644 - Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Student Housing

### Sponsor

**Council Member Avella**  
38-50 Bell Blvd. (Suite C), Bayside  
Bayside, New York, 11361  
(718) 747-2137 (tel.)  
(718) 747-3105 (fax)  
avella@council.nyc.ny.us

### Jurisdiction

City of New York

*15 co-sponsors as of 7/6/05*

### Summary

This law would require the installation of all student housing on campus to be equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler on or after January 1, 2006. Furthermore, any housing that a student is referred to shall be required to also be equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system.

### Funding

n/a

### Status

5/15/05 Referred to the Committee on Housing and Buildings

## Fire FYI

A website and newsletter has been launched to help support the fire fighting industry and the fire service. Called Fire FYI ([www.firefyi.org](http://www.firefyi.org)), the site has been developed by Kidde (an underwriter of the Center for Campus Fire Safety). There is a wealth of information on this informative site and readers can also sign up for a free e-newsletter with even more information. **Included on this site...**

### A Resource Center that contains

- Fire Safety Checklist
- CO Safety Checklist
- Lesson Plans
- Fire Escape Plan Worksheet
- Downloadable Brochures
- Kidde Korner
- Articles
- Presentations

### Media training primer

- Talking Points
- Body Language
- Answering Questions
- Bridging to Key Messages
- Media Guidelines

### Safety Made Simple

- Fire General
- CO General
- Holiday Safety
- College Housing Safety
- BBQ/Grilling Safety
- Cooking Safety
- Fireworks Safety
- Turkey Fryer Safety
- Candle Safety
- Storm Safety
- Camping & Fire Safety

Fire departments can also purchase bulk quantities of the Everyone Goes Home wristbands for fundraising. These are visual reminders of the need to protect our first responders, and the proceeds go to support the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation.

Also, the site had an interactive map of codes and legislation being introduced around the country.

Stop by at [www.firefyi.org](http://www.firefyi.org) and take a look!

# CAMPUS Fire Log

The following are brief summaries of incidents that have occurred in college occupancies. Unless noted otherwise, they have been taken from press accounts and have not been verified for accuracy. Several of these incidents will be profiled in future issues of Campus Firewatch.

*If you have an incident that you would like to contribute for this column, please contact us at [publisher@campus-firewatch.com](mailto:publisher@campus-firewatch.com).*

**October 4, 2005**

**Library Fire**

**Tufts University**

**Medford, Massachusetts**

A laptop computer caught fire and was extinguished by the owner using a portable fire extinguisher. The building's fire alarm system was activated by a pull station and the building was evacuated. Damage was limited to the laptop computer and the library reopened shortly after the fire was extinguished.

**October 7, 2005**

**Fatal off-campus house fire**

**North Carolina State University**

**Raleigh, North Carolina**

Two students were killed in an off-campus duplex.

Mark Brandon Davis of Raleigh, a senior majoring in materials science engineering, and Dylan Pilkington of Grifton, a sophomore majoring in mechanical engineering were killed in the fire.

The cause of the fire was determined to be careless disposal of smoking materials.

© 2005 Campus Firewatch™

**October 7, 2005**

**Fatal off-campus apartment fire**

**University of Kansas**

**Lawrence, Kansas**

One student was killed in an off-campus apartment complex fire. It was determined that the cause of the fire was arson.

Nicole Bingham, 21, from Wichita, Kansas, died in the fire. At least two other KU students were hospitalized. Two other occupants of the apartment complex were also killed in the fire.

**October 8, 2005**

**Residence Hall Fire**

**Taylor University**

**Fort Wayne, Indiana**

A residence hall was seriously damaged by an early morning fire. The fire was detected by a security officer who called 911 at 5:49 a.m. The fire, which originated in a first-floor room, spread to the floor above. Thirty-five students were relocated to other rooms on campus.

**October 9, 2005**

**Academic Building Fire,  
Sprinkler Save**

**Towson University**

**Towson, Maryland**

A fire in an unoccupied chemistry building was brought under control by the activation of the building's automatic fire sprinkler system. It was believed that the fire was caused by chemicals in a cabinet reacting. Damage was estimated to be \$10,000.

**October 11, 2005**

**Residence Hall Fire**

**Hyles-Anderson College**

**Schererville, Indiana**

A fire at 12:45 a.m. forced the evacuation of approximately 1,000 students from their rooms. The fire was reported to be caused when a 500-watt quartz lamp fell out of its display and ignited straw and corn stalks in a fall decoration on the second-floor hallway. One student was transported to an area hospital for smoke inhalation.

**October 14, 2005**

**Off-campus apartment fire**

**University of Northern Iowa**

**Cedar Falls, Iowa**

Thirty-eight people, many of them students from the University of Northern Iowa, lost most of their belongings in an afternoon fire. The fire broke out at approximately 4:00 p.m. in an unoccupied apartment and spread to two adjacent apartments. Two occupants from a nearby apartment attempted to enter the apartment of origin but were forced back by the heat and smoke.

**October 18, 2005**

**Residence Hall Fire**

**Central Michigan University**

**Mount Pleasant, Michigan**

Continued on next page

Campus Fire Log Continued from previous page

A fire that broke out at 10:30 p.m. was caused by an unattended pan on a stove. The fire occurred in a second floor kitchenette and smoke filled the entire residence hall. One resident assistant was transported to an area hospital for smoke inhalation.

**October 19, 2005**  
**Residence Hall Fire**  
**Mississippi Valley State University**  
**Itta Bena, Mississippi**

A fire in an occupied residence hall forced the evacuation of 88 students at 1:00 a.m. The fire started in a first-floor room and then spread to the room above and two adjacent first floor rooms. According to reports, the fire alarm system did not activate and the occupants went door to door, alerting others to the fire. Two women were charged with arson in starting the fire.

**October 23, 2005**  
**Off-campus apartment fire**  
**Penn State University**  
**State College, Pennsylvania**

The fire department responded to an automatic alarm at 6:00 a.m. and found a trash can in an apartment already extinguished by the tenants using a dry chemical fire extinguisher. The smoke alarm in the apartment alerted the occupants to the fire.

**October 23, 2005**  
**Residence Hall Fire**  
**Yale University**  
**New Haven, Connecticut**

Papers were set on fire underneath a residence hall stairway. The fire alarm system was activated at 6:00 p.m. The fire did not cause any significant damage to the building.

**October 24, 2005**  
**Off-campus apartment fire**  
**Penn State University**  
**State College, Pennsylvania**

At 11:00 p.m. there was a report of a mattress fire in an apartment. The fire department arrived on the scene and found the mattress outside of the structure. The fire had been caused by a faulty extension cord under the bed. Tenants were awake and discovered the fire. Minor damage inside the apartment.

**October 24, 2005**  
**Sprinkler save**  
**Meharry Medical College**  
**Nashville, Tennessee**

A fire in a locked room was controlled by the activation of an automatic fire sprinkler system.

**October 25, 2005**  
**Off-campus house fire**  
**Oklahoma State University**  
**Stillwater, Oklahoma**

A house occupied by students from Oklahoma State University was destroyed in an early-morning fire. The fire, which started on the porch, spread to the interior of the house through the windows. After alerting his roommates, one of the occupants attempted to extinguish the fire using a fire extinguisher. When he was not able to get it to operate, he attempted to use a second one. By this time, the fire had grown too large and he evacuated and then called 911 to report the fire. When the fire department arrived on the scene they were able to extinguish the fire within fifteen minutes.



## Campus Firewatch Website

The value of this newsletter doesn't stop with just this copy. Visit its companion website at [www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com), where you will find a wealth of information relating to campus fire safety.

If you have something that you would like to contribute, please send it to us at [publisher@campus-firewatch.com](mailto:publisher@campus-firewatch.com)

See you there!

# The Three Deadly Nights

*By Dave Westol, CEO, Theta Chi Fraternity*

*This article first appeared in the Fall 2005 issue of FRMT News, a publication of HRH/Kirklin & Co., LLC. Reprinted with permission.*

There are three, just three. And no matter what the length of the new member or pledge program may be, these three deadly nights are always included if the chapter involved uses hazing practices.

## First of the Deadly Three

The first night, of course, is the evening that the new members or pledges receive their bids. Although the bids may be presented during the day, the activities always occur at night. In the Greek community, we have a lot of different names for the simple process of inviting someone to join, don't we? "Bid Night", "Presents"(sic), "Call out", "Pass out"(men are passed along over a crowd on the hands of members), "Jump" (men leap into a crowd) and the list is long.

But those are just the preliminaries. The main event comes later and involves alcohol, usually a lot of alcohol. And yes, we've heard all of the excuses and tortured rationalizations about new members or pledges consuming alcohol within the context of bid night. They come in many different forms, from many different people. "They didn't have to drink" "We drank with them" "No one forced them to drink" "It was their choice" "Some guys didn't drink at all".

All of those excuses have one thing in common. They will not hold up in court, much less during a university judicial hearing. The fact is that new members or pledges do not have a choice...not if they want to be accepted....not if they want to be part of the brotherhood...not if they want to demonstrate that they truly belong.

An ever-increasing number of young men---most of them 18 or 19 years old---have made the choice to drink alcohol during bid night, and their lives ended between six and 48 hours later. Sometimes they were clinically dead (irreversible loss of brain stem function), and other times they were simply dead. Nonetheless they died. Again and again, the same sad facts surface----drinking a bottle or bottles of liquor as a new member or pledge class until the alcohol was gone...matching members, drink for drink...drinking in competition, drinking to demonstrate manhood...drinking, heavy and high risk drinking.

## Standing for Brotherhood?

The second deadly night: "Bigs" or "Big Brother Night" an evening for the fraternity to bond with the new members and demonstrate support.

In a hazing chapter, Big Brother Night often involves an exchange of "gifts," a bottle of liquor for another bottle of liquor. Sometimes the type of liquor is determined by the "family" that the new member or pledge is joining. Regardless, the focus is not upon the gift aspect. It is upon consuming the liquor as a means of bonding with your big or little brother.

## Fight for acceptance or a fight for life

Finally, the last of the three deadly nights, pre-initiation. The third deadly night is often the fraternal equivalent of a floating holiday. At some point during pre-initiation, the new members or pledges must consume alcohol...often an excessive amount of alcohol. Sometimes it is an act of mercy, if you 10-4 the hazers. "These guys need a break--we're actually helping them out". Sometimes it is planned or a hide-

bound tradition--"This is the night that they must drink a keg". Regardless, consumption and needless death occurs.

## Moving Forward

Each situation of the three deadly nights involves a violation of FIPG or fraternity risk management policy. The use of alcohol at any event involving or focused upon new members or pledges is a violation, pure and simple. Moreover, these activities often violate the most basic federal, state, and local laws. All in the name of brotherhood.

Many, many people have written articles far more eloquent than this piece about hazing and the use of alcohol in hazing. Some of those people have been parents of young men who died in the process of joining an FRMT member fraternity. Some have been friends of the young men. Some are administrators at colleges or universities. Some have been professional staff members or volunteers of fraternities. Some simply see a cause to write.

Regardless of the point of view, we know one thing for certain. If a chapter allows alcohol into a bid night event, big brother night, or pre-initiation, that chapter has set the stage for a tragedy. Men's inter/national fraternity chapters are a most regrettable example of that ancient adage that, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it". Perhaps this fall, we can demonstrate that we have learned two very important lessons.

1. Hazing and brotherhood are polar opposites. We cannot have one and rightfully have the other.
2. Alcohol and hazing are a deadly combination, especially on the three deadly nights.

Continued on next page

The Three Deadly Nights Continued from previous page

We have so much to give to the young men joining our fraternal and interfraternal brotherhood...and they have so much to give to us. Let us commit ourselves to making these three nights examples of brotherhood, and brotherhood the example for fraternities.

Dave Westol  
Chief Executive Officer, Theta Chi  
Fraternity

*An experienced and popular speaker on the subject of fraternity hazing, Dave Westol is best known for his presentation "Hazing on Trial" delivered to thousands of audiences on hundreds of campuses and numerous fraternal educational sessions over the past 25 years. Well respected in the Greek community, Westol has served FIPG and FEA as president and currently serves on the NIC Legal Affairs Committee.*

---

All in the name of Brotherhood? Continued from page 1  
and promote the development and enhancement of all members is the "big brother night," often the first form of acceptance from the initiated members to the pledges, associate or new members in the chapter.

Unfortunately, an evening devoted to fidelity and reinforcement of fraternal values through friendship and brotherly love has transformed into a cause for excessive high risk drinking, physical injury, and on some occasions death.

One need look no further than the high profile deaths of Gordie Bailey at the University of Colorado and Blake Hammontree at the University of Oklahoma in the fall of 2004 to recognize the persistent problem of involving alcohol with the customs and ceremonies of our membership continues.

True, there have been great advancements for the culture of fraternities in the past decade; initiatives to transform organization focus, targeted education

on alcohol and risk management, statements of expectation, and an overall willingness to change. However, the painful reminder that the culture of the Greek community is influenced greatly by alcohol and the irresponsible actions of our members is as salient today as it was nearly one decade prior following the death of Scott Krueger at MIT.

### **What can be done to curb such dangerous and destructive behavior?**

There may not be one clear procedure or method to remedy negative actions associated with current "big brother" programs. However, chapter leadership can follow a few simple guidelines as they work to present a positive "big brother" program.

1. Remove alcohol from all new member/brotherhood events
2. Involve key constituents in the activities of chapter
3. Reinforce organizational values through action
4. Transition framework towards a mentoring program
5. Commitment from "big brothers" to serve as positive role models

Certainly, a main emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of positive members supporting the core purpose of the fraternity in addition to a well-structured and constituent core of alumni, advisors, parents, university administrators, and community members to support the efforts of the chapter.

If a chapter wishes to provide a "big brother" program than it should simply be what it is; a framework for mentoring and personal assistance from the initiated members to the members wishing to seek admittance into the fraternity. Void of alcohol or measures of servitude. Stemming to the early beginnings of fraternity, members earn their place within the organization when they accept a bid for membership.

Clearly, the program should be a stronger commitment from the initiated brothers as they are responsible for the development and mentoring of the younger members and teaching of the fraternal ritual and values through actions and meaning. Multiplied throughout the chapter membership, a positive program can quickly influence a chapter and shape an environment providing ample support to all members and enhancing the fraternal experience.

### **Changing the chapter culture**

Without these critical elements the membership will remain rudderless and left to the devices found within the culture, which promises to be vastly different than the true intentions of the organizations founders. Moreover, all entities of each fraternity and the bodies which support it must hold expectations high and maintain accountability of all members, communicating that forced consumption of alcohol and hazing are not the norm and will not be accepted.

Undoubtedly, it will take great effort and foresight from an undergraduate leader to place such thoughts into motion and execute a proper program. Therefore, it is imperative that a solid core of chapter leaders voices concern for current practices and details the faults or shortcomings of the current program: "it's dangerous, not in line with values of the organization, and does not support the development of members."

Needless death and irresponsible behavior can be avoided. We need to be willing to challenge the status quo, identify why we have is strayed from where it originated, and provide a framework to assure new efforts will provide the desired results.

# AN EXAM YOUR STUDENTS CAN'T AFFORD TO FAIL

MAKE YOUR RESIDENCE HALL FIRE-SAFETY PRESENTATIONS UNFORGETTABLE



**Seeing is believing**

UL's Video offers dramatic footage of a "real" dorm-room fire plus compelling personal testimonials.

Underwriters Laboratories 14-minute video "The Residence Hall Fire" is packed with fast-paced information designed to help your students live fire-free on campus or off, including:

-  **Examples of common fire hazards**
-  **Practical fire-safety tips**
-  **Ideas for escape planning**



**Underwriters  
Laboratories Inc. ®**

Price: \$105.00. To order go to: [www.uluniversity.com/rh\\_video.php](http://www.uluniversity.com/rh_video.php) or call **1-888-503-5536**

# CAMPUS Firewatch™

You can subscribe ONLINE at [www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com), or Fill out the following form and send it with your check.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: this is the address where each issue of Campus Firewatch will be sent)

Please enclose a check for \$169.00, payable to: writer-tech.com, llc. Mail this form, with your check to: Campus Firewatch, c/o writer-tech.com, llc, P.O. Box 1046, Belchertown, MA 01007. Contact us at any time if you have any questions [support@campus-firewatch.com](mailto:support@campus-firewatch.com), or 1-413-323-6002

[www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com)